

Heritage Commission

September 15, 2020

Draft Minutes

Members Present: John Merkle, Chairman, Pam Gjettem, HDC Rep., Maura Fay, Treasurer, Julie Gilman, Select Board Rep., Jay Myers, Vice Chair, Bill Campbell, new member. Also present was Greg Bisson from Parks and Recreation.

Call Meeting To Order: John Merkle, Chairman, called meeting to order via ZOOM at 12:30 pm.

Business: Approval of August 18, 2020 meeting minutes. There were no changes and Pam made a motion to approve. Julie seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved.

Next on the agenda is the Black Heritage Pocket Park update. Maura said there is not a lot to report. They met on August 20th. She said they talked a lot about how they wanted to focus the design of the park. The general consensus was that everyone wanted it to be a broader focus on Exeter black history and they had some discussion on how this would look. They will talk more about this. She said they have a meeting scheduled for next week. Pam asked if they picked a spot for it. Maura said they are still talking about that. She said Renay had been talking with the Swasey Trustees and she is not sure if she had gone before the board as a whole. This is still in discussion. Pam said that she thinks it should be someplace else. Maura said if that is the feeling of the trustees, that is something they will honor. Julie asked if there had been any suggestions for outside of Swasey Parkway. Maura said not specifically. Until there is a definite yah or nah from the Swasey Trustees. John asked if there were any measures the commission had to take and Maura said not at this time. John then asked if there was any talk about Fox Street. Maura said they did talk about that some. Pam said the Park Street used to be called Katie's Lane and there is an article coming out on this. Bill asked if the Exeter Common was brought up as a place for this. Maura said that is another thing to throw out certainly as an idea. Jay thanked Bill for this because this was a question he had. He then asked about the piece of property across from the Post Office. Julie said that property is privately owned and it would not be an opportunity. John then asked if there were any more comments on this. Julie said when they are talking about different sites, that there be a central monument as opposed to a walking tour with smaller monuments. The commission should talk to the Select Board about the pocket park on Water Street. Maura said that was another little corner that could be worked with.

Next on the agenda is the discussion of Park/Cass Streets Heritage District. John asked what they had done over the past thirty days. Julie said that Jay put together the presentation, which she has a couple of comments on. When he described the Heritage Commission and how it came to be and what its purpose is and what the State Laws are, it should be mentioned that

one was established one in 2006 by a vote of the people. Julie said she was referring to slide 2. John asked if the commission was still planning on taking this to the Planning Board before or after the announcements are sent out to the public. Pam said she thought they had decided to take it to the Planning Board or at least talk to them about it. Julie said there are pluses and minus either way. If they go to the Planning Board and they say this is not our field of expertise, they are done. The other is if they have a public meeting and they introduce the topic, then they can go to the Planning Board and say they have this much interest. Bill asked about this and John said they had a grant for the Certified Local Government Program and they did a survey of Park Street, Cass Street, Wallace Street, Oak Street, that whole section of town up through Main Street up to the school. It was determined that it had significant historical significance. They are pursuing the possibility of creating a Heritage District, not a Historical District. It is different. A Heritage District does not have the huge regulatory issues to deal with it and it gets the people in that district involved in it and the management of it. The Planning Board oversees this from a land use perspective. John also told Bill that he can go on to the Town's website and there is a 200 page document he can read on it. There is also a map and it identifies all of the buildings in that district. John asked if the commission is still going to notify the neighborhood. Jay said that like Julie had said previously, it is either one way or the other. Maybe flip a coin. He said he is either way. If it is easier for the commission to plan ahead and meet with the Planning Board and get on the agenda, then let's do it. Maura said that since it will take some time to get on the Planning Board agenda, plan to have a community meeting in the interim so they have some sense of what the interest is. John said Exeter TV is available to put together a ZOOM Meeting for anyone who wants to participate. Bill said he thinks this would be a good idea to do before going to the Planning Board. John said they could probably get a list of the property owners and put together the post cards instead of the door hangers. He thinks they should get the postcards done and out to the public. Once they have this piece of material together before it gets finalized, there should be a meeting day and a venue. Pam said this would be the venue, ZOOM. John thinks the postcard would be the first informational piece that would go out to the public. Julie said yes and she thinks they do both and send it out to the survey area and they can also post it as an activity on the Town Calendar and on the website. Julie said they need to talk to the Building Department about this because they have no idea. John said he has talked to Doug and Barbara about this a little bit. He said Doug was excited and thinks it is a good idea. Maura said she thinks when the postcards get set out, there should be a date set for a community meeting. John said once they do this, they should put some sort of presentation together. Julie said this can be done through the shared screen function. Jay said he can share his screen now and they can test out the process. He has a draft of the postcard he can share with the commission members. The members liked what Jay was showing them. John suggested putting a line on either the front or the back side of the postcard about going to the Heritage Commission website. Maura asked when the members wanted to do the actual community event. Pam said they should do it as soon as they can. Maura asked if late October was too ambitious. Bill thought the third week of October would be good, but suggested looking at the calendar to see what dates are available. Maura looked at the town calendar and suggested October 28th. John said he will contact Barbara to see if this date is available. Julie said they have work they can do as part of their work product without

having to have a public meeting to discuss it. She said they either meet more often between now and October 28th or they work via e-mail and include Barbara and Doug so that documents can be made available. John said it would probably be easier to do via the email than trying to meet publicly. John said he thinks they have made some good progress here. Everyone agrees. He said at some point, he thinks they will have to have a walking tour for everyone that is interested in it. This is something for later on, not right now. John asked if there was any more discussion on this and there was none.

Other Business: Pam said it really is a Historic District business, but it is the Heritage Commission's business also. The hospital still wants to tear down 110 High Street. This is on the agenda for the HDC. She then asked if something is going to be torn down, shouldn't it come to us. She said they have been through this over and over again. Julie said they have already made the decision on that and have had the public meeting and that was 2019. Julie said she feels the opinion still stands unless someone thinks they need to go through it all again. Bill said they have a small group of people who are going to be there. He said one of the problems is that they have a P&S with a company called Jeffersons Homes and they are planning to tear it down and build another house. He said there is no guarantee for Jeffersons to change their mind and not build and sell it. Julie said she needed to interrupt Bill because what he is talking about is not for this commission.

Next on the agenda is the flag pole. Greg Bission from Parks and Recreation shared his screen to show the present one and the one they are proposing. It will be a satin flag pole and the cost for a dark brown or black one is out of their budget. On the top of the satin flag pole will be an eagle. The total for the satin pole and the eagle is \$2,359.63. The veterans group that usually goes in the Memorial Parade is going to be helping with the funding for this. They wanted to do something to give back to the community because the Memorial Day Parade was cancelled. It will take 3-4 weeks to get this delivered and hopefully they can get it installed before Veterans Day. Pam said that will be gorgeous and it is a wonderful surprise. Julie said the satin finish will be good. Julie made a motion to approve the proposal of the new flag pole at Winter Street Cemetery. Pam seconded. All were in favor and motion approved.

John said if they hold the regular meeting in October, it would be on the 20th. He asked if everyone is comfortable with this time and everyone is. He said they are looking at the 28th to do a public meeting as well. The 20th will be 1:30 pm and the 28th will be at 6:30 pm.

With no further business, John made a motion to adjourn. Pam seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 1:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary

